

Public

Environmental and Social Data Sheet

Overview

Project Name: Hollandse Kust Noord V Offshore Wind Farm
Project Number: 2019-0609
Country: The Netherlands
Project Description: Construction of an offshore wind farm with a capacity of approximately 700 MW, located 18.5km off the coast of the Netherlands in the Hollandse Kust V Noord wind farm zone.

EIA required: yes

Project included in Carbon Footprint Exercise¹: yes
(details for projects included are provided in section: "EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise")

Environmental and Social Assessment

Environmental Assessment

The wind farm is located off the Dutch coast about 18 km from Egmond aan Zee. About 25% of the total area falls within the Territorial Waters, the remaining part is located in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Netherlands.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment ("SEA") has been prepared for the Holland Coast area and for the area north of the Wadden Islands. On this basis, suitable zones for offshore wind farm development have been proposed. The project is located in such a zone.

The offshore wind farm project falls under Annex II of Directive 2011/92/EU (amended 2014/52/EU). Under Dutch law, an EIA including full public consultation is mandatory and was duly conducted and completed in 2019.

The project was developed by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO, a dedicated agency of the Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Policy), who conducted a number of preparatory studies for the project including the EIA, in order to define all conditions and limitations for the implementation of the project prior to the selection of a private sponsor for the realisation. As long as the Sponsor's final design remains within there is no need for a further EIA.

¹ Only projects that meet the scope of the Carbon Footprint Exercise, as defined in the EIB Carbon Footprint Methodologies, are included, provided estimated emissions exceed the methodology thresholds: 20,000 tonnes CO2e/year absolute (gross) or 20,000 tonnes CO2e/year relative (net) – both increases and savings.

Luxembourg, 12th March 2020

The Competent Authority to issue the Wind Farm Decision (includes the environmental consent) is the Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Policy in consultation with other respective authorities, (Ministeries of Infrastructure and Water Management, of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and of Interior and Kingdom Relation). The process is governed by the Dutch Offshore Wind Energy Act (of July 2015). Taking into account that development and permitting are clearly separated procedures within different entities under the Ministry and that the EIA includes the agreement of further authorities (mentioned above), the process can be considered as impartial and diligent.

The project is located outside protected areas and is not expected to have significant negative impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

Not knowing the final design of the wind farm, the EIA, which includes an Appropriate Assessment (“AA”), uses a bandwidth allowing for flexibility in turbine type, foundation technology, installation method, exact location etc., but defines a range that must be adhered to. The underlying EIA studies have evaluated potential impacts of the project on climate, soil, noise (underwater and over water), safety, benthos and fish; sea mammals; avifauna; electromagnetic fields, socio-economic impacts, visual disturbance or cultural heritage. The study further accounts for cumulative effects with nearby existing and planned offshore wind farms.

The Council of State had received appeals against the Wind Farm Decision but it declared that the received appeals were not admissible and that the Wind Farm Decision is irrevocable on August 12th 2019. The Decision covers the investigated bandwidth of technical solutions regarding turbines and foundations. The maximum number of turbines to be installed is 95; the total height a turbine shall not exceed 251 m and the distance between blade tip and sea surface needs to be more than 25 m. Regarding the detailed design, the permit leaves flexibility to the sponsors for optimisation within the defined zone, respecting specified distances to boundaries, existing power lines, existing and planned oil and gas pipelines, archaeological sites, wrecks etc. as well as a minimum distance between the turbines.

The Decision defines a number of conditions the project must adhere to. To reduce the potential collision/disturbance risk for avifauna the wind farm control system must be able to recognise actual bird migration and to stop or limit the operation of the turbines in the event of a large bird migration with heightened risk of bird collision.

In particular, for the construction phase, the increased underwater (piling) noise may represent a risk to benthos fish and particularly sea mammals. Noise emission limits have been defined, including more stringent levels during sea mammals breeding season. In addition, acoustic deterrents and noise ramp-up procedures (“soft-start piling”) need to be applied. The promoter is required to provide a piling plan, with noise mitigation solutions proposed, for approval by the competent authority two months before the start of installation.

Visual impact and “light pollution” needs to be limited to a specified level.

The offshore grid including substation, subsea transmission cable, landfall and land transmission line up to the connection to a new substation at Beverwijk, is not part of this operation and is subject to a separate EIA process. Due to a pending appeal, related to the relief of Nitrogen during construction, the permitting process is still ongoing. The wind farm tender is expected to be published only after the grid permit is final and irrevocable as well.

EIB Carbon Footprint Exercise

Wind power as such is carbon-free generation and does not produce direct CO₂-emissions.

Luxembourg, 12th March 2020

Without knowing the detailed design and technology yet, emissions savings are estimated to be in the range of 865,000 to 1002,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year compared to a baseline of existing thermal power plants and new gas CCGT plants. For the annual accounting purposes of the EIB Carbon Footprint, the project emissions (as determined for the final configuration) will be prorated according to the EIB lending amount signed in that year, as a proportion of project cost.

Social Assessment, where applicable

n/a

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

The final Wind Farm Site Decision for Hollandse Kust (noord) Wind Farm has been published in the Government Gazette on 11 April 2019 with a term for public inspection and potential appeals until 24 May 2019.

The Council of State has finally rejected the appeals against the Wind Farm Decisions on 12 August 2019. The Wind Farm Site Decision Hollandse Kust (noord) is irrevocable per this date.

Other Environmental and Social Aspects

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy has developed a comprehensive environmental monitoring and evaluation programme, to follow the effects of all Dutch wind energy development and will publish the finding and results. The respective investor will be required to contribute relevant information and data for this programme.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The wind farm's EIA concluded that with adequate precautionary measures, the impacts on fauna and flora, including on local and migrating birds, marine mammals, benthos and invertebrates were considered to be acceptable. The Environmental Decision includes a comprehensive set of conditions (mitigation measures) and monitoring obligations in line with the recommendations contained in the EIA studies.

With the appropriate conditions, as defined in the Environmental Decision, in place, the overall environmental impact of the project is considered acceptable to the Bank.

The Bank may request copies of key information, which the Promoter needs to deliver to the authorities during the construction, for example the piling plan including the noise mitigation techniques.

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